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ABSTRACT

This booklet presents a set of professional ethics intended to serve as guides for professional conduct for individuals involved in the career planning, placement, and recruitment process. It is noted that compliance with the principles outlined in this guide will ensure an open and free selection of employment opportunities; informed decision-making by candidates; and consideration of the needs of the employer, the campus, and the candidate; and will reduce the potential for abuses by recruiters, colleges and universities, and candidates. The first part of this guide presents principles for career planning. Seven principles for colleges and universities, four principles for employers, and three principles for students/clients are included. The second part of this guide presents principles for placement and recruitment. Included in this section are six principles for colleges and universities, nine principles for employers, and seven principles for candidates. Four recommended problem-solving procedures for handling questionable practices or problems involving recruiters, college or university personnel, or candidates are also included. (NB)

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PRINCIPLES

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

FOR CAREER PLANNING, PLACEMENT AND RECRUITMENT

CG 019230

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

The career planning, placement, and recruitment process is a vital, integral part of the total educational experience. Therefore, it is essential that those involved in the process be governed by a set of professional ethics.

The principles outlined in this paper are intended to serve as guides for professional conduct. Compliance with these principles benefits all concerned and the profession as a whole by ensuring:

- An open and free selection of employment opportunities in an atmosphere conducive to objective thought, where job candidates can choose optimum long-term uses of their talents that are consistent with personal objectives and based upon consideration of all relevant facts;
- Informed and responsible decision making by candidates;
- Consideration of needs of the employing organization, the campus, and the candidate, resulting in mutually satisfying relationships.

Adherence to the guidelines set out in this paper will also reduce the potential for abuses, such as:

- Abuses by recruiters which could create negative images and could result in revocation of on-campus recruitment privileges;
- Abuses by colleges and universities—which could lead to fewer recruiters participating in on-campus recruitment and fewer students signing up for placement services;
- Abuses by candidates which could reduce opportunities for all candidates; in particular, individuals' career/life plans could be negatively affected by their own or others' actions.

These principles are not all-inclusive; they are intended to serve as a framework within which the career planning, placement, and recruitment process should function, and a foundation upon which professionalism could be promoted.

The Board of Governors
THE COLLEGE PLACEMENT COUNCIL, INC.
June 24, 1985

Principles for Career Planning

Career planning is an ongoing process that has become increasingly critical to an individual's success in attaining desired goals. The career planning function rests on a philosophical foundation consistent with the basic developmental theories of vocational choice and the free enterprise system.

Colleges and Universities

- **Assist individuals in developing a career plan without exerting undue influence.**

Career planning is an educational process dedicated to the student's self-realization and self-direction. The counselor should not impose personal values or biases, nor encourage decisions based on insufficient data. Any conflicts of interest should also be acknowledged and examined at once.

- **Be knowledgeable in the career planning field.**

Practitioners should possess: appropriate education; experience in career planning; counseling skills; the ability to deal effectively with students, faculty, administrators, and employers; and the capacity to teach and do research in the career planning field.

- **Be well-versed in administering and evaluating assessment tools.**

The career planning practitioner should: have an adequate understanding of the characteristics being measured to assure selection of the most effective testing tools; administer and interpret tests only within the range of the practitioner's professional knowledge; educate students so they understand the purpose and limitations of all test results; and keep all results confidential.

- **Provide a comprehensive program that includes all pertinent campus resources without charge.**

Career planning practitioners should identify, mobilize, educate, train, and coordinate the various personnel involved in the career planning process. These resource personnel should also abide by the same principles and practices set forth in this document.

The career planning function is an integral part of the education process and it is

recommended that students should not be charged for professional services.

- **Ensure confidentiality and accuracy of information.**

Such data as referrals, records, and career information should only be disseminated in a professional, unbiased, and accurate manner with the consent of all parties involved.

- **Encourage and follow nondiscriminatory practices.**

Career planning practitioners should be prepared to provide competent assistance to all students regardless of background. This includes those who do not fit a majority pattern in terms of age, disability, socioeconomic status, or other irrelevant variables.

- **Help fulfill the educational mission of the institution.**

Career planning practitioners have a responsibility to offer assistance in establishing priorities of the college or university and reaching the institution's stated objectives. While their primary concern is the career planning needs of the individual student, counselors are ultimately accountable to the institution, and to that institution's educational mission.

Employers

- **Provide accurate, unbiased information without charge.**

In this way, employers can best serve students, and help them to make intelligent, informed decisions about which career path is right for them. Materials should be presented in an unbiased, ethical, and responsible manner, drawing generalizations beyond the employer's organizations whenever possible.

- **Possess a thorough knowledge of the employer's organization and industry.**

To be effective in their career planning involvement with students, employers should be well-versed in the career opportunities available in their field. Employers should also demonstrate how academic preparation can be applied to the "world of work."

- **Become involved in the career planning process.**

Employers should be responsible for becoming a part of the process. To accomplish this they

should: develop campus contacts with faculty and student groups; expose the college community to their organization through tours, career days, on-campus speakers, research projects; alert career planning and placement offices and faculty to employment trends which have curricular implications; and develop cooperative education programs and other experiential work that would enable students to gain experience in their chosen fields.

All the above activities should be coordinated through the career planning offices and should have no "strings" attached.

- **Honor the policies and procedures of individual institutions.**

Employers should not expect preferential treatment from career planning personnel, and should abide by the institution's rules and administrative practices. Any deviation from normal could seriously impugn the integrity of both the employer and the institution.

Students/Clients

- **Take responsibility for their own actions in the career planning process.**

Students/clients should acknowledge responsibility for their actions when involved in experiential opportunities and their own career decisions. They should also take the initiative to involve themselves in the career planning process.

- **Present accurate personal information.**

Falsifying data is not only unethical, but might also hamper the overall self-assessment, career exploration, and decision-making process.

- **Honor the principles and procedures of the institution.**

Students/clients should be sure to notify the career planning office of any related activities undertaken independently.

Principles for Placement/Recruitment

As the placing of students has taken on greater importance over the years, the influence of placement practitioners has increased proportionately. This elevation in status has thrust

upon the profession certain responsibilities relating to ethics and principles of conduct.

Colleges and Universities

- **Establish and monitor practices which ensure the fair and accurate representation of students and the institution in the recruitment process.**

Placement practitioners should also encourage such accuracy in other offices of the institution as well. Examples of unethical practices are: condoning misrepresentation of information on student resumes; knowingly permitting students to continue the interviewing process after notification that they have accepted an offer; knowingly permitting students to utilize the interview process strictly for practice or for purposes other than those acceptable to the recruiting organization; knowingly permitting students to interview with recruiting organizations for which they would be ineligible for hire.

- **Provide the placement office's professional services to students without charge.**

The placement function is an integral part of the education process, and the institution's support of such services is a necessity. Although rising costs stretch academic budgets, it is recommended that students should not be charged for routine services. However, charging students fees for services they would ordinarily pay for, such as copying and mailing, is acceptable, as long as the charges are based on actual production and postage costs.

- **Make the placement facilities and support services available to employing organizations without charge.**

On-campus recruiters offer a wide variety of career opportunities, which encourage and support the students' decision-making process. Charging for routine services may adversely affect the working relationship between recruiting and placement practitioners, and might encourage recruiters to pressure placement offices for services not in the best interest of students or the institution.

Fees charged for special services, such as job fairs, etc., should not exceed costs. Soliciting funds for special projects is also considered acceptable.

- **Promote and follow nondiscriminatory practices.**

Students' rights should not be infringed upon

by unethical or illegal dissemination of information. No information covered by federal or state laws should be disclosed to any organization without the student's written consent. Organizations should also be advised that student information cannot be disclosed to another party without additional written consent.

- **Protect the candidate's freedom of choice in selecting a career or position from undue influence by faculty, administrators, and/or recruiters.**

When assisting students in examining career options, practitioners should not impose personal values or biases on candidates, nor encourage decisions based on insufficient data.

- **Inform students of obligations they will incur, both financial and otherwise, when utilizing the services of agencies or other organizations performing recruiting services for a fee.**

Where policy permits such organizations to interview students on campus, placement practitioners should require an advance copy of their contracts and a description of all fees and services. Students should be told to read this information and be aware of all its provisions before signing any contract.

Employers

- **Be responsible for the ethical and legal conduct of the organization's representatives throughout the recruiting process.**

Questions that are illegal, discriminatory, or unrelated to the selection process should not be asked, nor should candidates' opinions of other candidates be solicited. Sharing of candidate information with other organizations without prior written approval of the student is unethical.

- **Assume responsibility for all representations made by authorized representatives.**

Honor all commitments made, and respond to candidates in the time frame mutually agreed to. An authorized representative should not misrepresent a position being offered. All offers should be confirmed in writing and copies should be sent to the appropriate placement office.

Reimbursements for travel expenses associated with an authorized plant visit should be equitable and prompt. The organization should

not impose undue hardships on the candidate when planning the visit.

- **Utilize only qualified, informed interviewers to represent the organization.**

Selection and training of recruiters is a key aspect of the college recruiting process. Recruiters should be well prepared to conduct effective interviews.

- **Respect the legal obligations of placement offices, and request only those services or information that legally can be provided.**

Only valid criteria should be used as screening devices. Recruiters also should not disclose confidential information to students, such as information obtained from the student's references.

- **Honor the policies and procedures of individual institutions.**

Recruiters should not expect preferential services from placement personnel and should abide by the institution's rules and administrative practices. Examples of unacceptable practices by recruiters are: failing to honor commitments; arriving late and/or leaving early; failing to adhere to the interview schedules established; failing to notify the placement office of changes far enough in advance to avoid undue hardship on the office or candidates involved.

- **Refrain from any practice that adversely affects the interviewing and decision-making processes.**

It is in the best interest of candidates, colleges, and employers that the consideration of careers and the selection of opportunities be based on an understanding of all relevant facts. The open and free selection of opportunities is a basic principle of the placement and recruitment field, and all recruiting practices should support this principle.

Recruiters should not subject candidates to undue or excessive pressure to accept offers. The time frame for decision making should be mutually agreed upon by both parties. It is incumbent upon both parties to keep each other informed of their status.

Special inducements, such as offering or soliciting gifts to gain favor in student referrals to extract preferential treatment, adversely affect the recruitment and decision-making process, and are considered unethical. However, contributions for legitimate projects

are acceptable, so long as no special consideration is expected in return.

All commitments, oral or written, should be honored by all parties. Recruiters should refrain from making any unauthorized commitments during the interviewing process.

Organizations should be prepared to honor all offers extended. Any inference that only the first acceptances received will be honored is unethical.

- **Make a full and accurate presentation of all relevant information during the recruiting process.**

Misrepresentation of any aspect of employment is unethical.

Recruiters should notify students and the placement office in advance whether they are interviewing for anticipated hiring purposes or to maintain an image or presence on campus.

- **Advise the placement office of all recruiting-related activities not conducted through that office.**

Organizations should not recruit through student associations or academic departments without the support and/or knowledge of the placement office. This practice tends to undermine the placement function, reducing its effectiveness as a recruiting service to students and its support to the recruiting organization.

- **Honor an employment offer that is accepted as a contractual agreement.**

Employers should not withdraw accepted job offers, but should honor all such commitments.

In the event of severe economic changes or other conditions requiring exceptions to this principle, the organization should initiate discussions with the affected placement office at the earliest possible time. Further, the organization should pursue a course of action for affected candidates which is fair and equitable.

All offers to students should be confirmed in writing. Organizations should notify placement offices of all offers when extended to students of their institutions and job acceptances as received.

Candidates

- **Honor the institution's policies and procedures.**

Candidates and student groups should

coordinate with the placement office any activities involving organizations that will recruit on campus.

- **Prepare for the recruiting process and accurately present qualifications and interests.**

Candidates are responsible for reading the organization's recruiting materials and completing required forms prior to the interview.

Falsifying data, such as G.P.A., date of graduation, major/minor, institutions attended, and eligibility to work in the United States, is not only unethical but may be grounds for dismissal if the candidate begins employment with the organization.

- **Sign up for interviews only when genuinely interested in the position for which the organization is interviewing.**

Interviewing for practice takes advantage of recruiters and limits interviewing opportunities for other students who may be sincerely interested in the opportunities being offered by the organizations.

- **Adhere to the interview schedules.**

If the candidates must cancel, they should notify the placement office well in advance so that other students may have an opportunity to interview.

An invitation for a plant/office visit should be acknowledged promptly, regardless of the student's decision; it should only be accepted when the candidate has a sincere interest in that employer. If a scheduled plant/office visit needs to be changed or cancelled, the candidate should notify the organization far enough in advance to alleviate any undue hardship or expense.

- **Notify organizations of the acceptance or rejection of offers by the earliest possible time and no later than the time mutually agreed upon.**

Candidates should expect offers to be confirmed in writing. Likewise, candidates should respond in writing to offers with acceptances or refusals as soon as they make their decisions, regardless of the deadline date. If candidates have legitimate reasons for extended consideration of offers, they should contact employers whose offers they are considering to establish mutually satisfactory decision dates. Candidates are expected to respond to all organizations whose offers they have received.

- **Honor an accepted offer as a contractual agreement. Withdraw from the interviewing process and notify the placement office, as well as other organizations with offers pending.**

Continuing to interview after accepting an offer, or reneging on accepted offers, is unethical. If a candidate encounters problems after accepting an offer, the circumstances should be discussed with a placement official and the organization which tendered the offer.

- **Expect reimbursement of expenses incurred during plant/office visits for only those expenditures pertinent to the trip.**

Candidates should discuss expected costs with the organization's recruiter. Information should be clarified in advance, including class or mode of travel, entertainment, automobile rental, lodging, accommodations, and food arrangements. If other organizations are visited on the same trip, the candidate should inform the organizations involved and prorate the costs.

Recommended Problem-Solving Procedures

Questionable practices or problems involving recruiters, college and university personnel, or candidates should be addressed as follows:

- **Discuss the incident with all affected parties as quickly as possible to determine the specifics of the situation and explore alternative courses of action.**
- **Attempt to resolve the incident among the affected parties.**
- **Refer unresolved concerns to the supervisors of the involved parties or other appropriate officials.**
- **Obtain additional information on resolution procedures from the appropriate regional association and/or the College Placement Council, Inc.**

Conclusion

Adherence to these principles will facilitate a mutually satisfying relationship among colleges and universities, employers, and candidates. The recruitment process should be fair and equitable to all, with large and small organizations having equal access to candidates, and candidates having the maximum exposure to opportunities available.

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